

House of Representatives

Testimony

Committee on Tourism, Outdoor Recreation and Natural Resources

October 20, 2009

Chairman Sheltrown, Vice Chair Slezak, Minority Vice Chair Stamas and members of the Committee, my name is Edward Haring and I am President of Kellogg Community College in Battle Creek.

I am here today to encourage you not to support House Bill 5474 which will remove the ability of locally elected Community College Boards of Trustees to carry out their constitutionally authorized responsibilities to supervise and control the community college for which they were elected.

The citizens of the community college district rely on their elected Community College Trustees to control the environment within which students are learning. These college boards authorize their administrative officials to control the conduct of students and others who are on the college campus. To remove that control would seriously undermine the ability of colleges to control student behavior and potentially limit the ability of colleges to take appropriate actions to provide positive learning environments for their students.

The Constitution of the State of Michigan, Const 1963, Art 8, Sec. 7 states, in part:

*The Legislature shall provide by law for the establishment and financial support of public, community and junior colleges, which shall be supervised and controlled by locally elected boards (emphasis added).*

The foundational strength of the community colleges is their ability to respond to local needs and local citizens who have elected them as Trustees of the College. Furthermore, these local citizens have voted a tax upon themselves to support their community college. To remove the ability of locally elected Boards of Trustees would seriously weaken one of the shining lights in the State of Michigan, namely Michigan's Community Colleges.

Not only do I oppose this legislation, but I also speak on behalf of the Michigan Community College Association which is made up of all 28 Michigan Community Colleges and the Association opposes this legislation as well. In addition, a recent poll published in the October 5, 2009 edition of Inside Michigan Politics reports that 67% of voting residents polled also oppose this legislation.

Thank you for your serious consideration in this matter.